

**Historical and Architectural Impact Assessment Report for the
Port Durnford State Forest, Umhlatuze, Uthungulu District
Municipality**



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1. Introduction:

Debbie Whelan from Archaic Consulting was approached by Gavin Anderson from Umlando: Archaeological Tourism and Resource Management, with the view to assessing the architectural sites or their remains that currently form part of the Port Durnford State Forest, administered by SiyaQubheka. The intention of the report is to dovetail into the larger Historical Impact Assessment documenting the archaeology which is compiled by the abovementioned company, for Exxaro (Pty) Ltd.

2. Statement of expertise and methodology:

Debbie Whelan of Archaic Consulting is an experienced researcher and has worked in the field of architectural conservation for over a decade. The limits of this report resulted in largely historical work, and appropriate channels were investigated.

A site inspection was carried out, led by Gavin Anderson, on 15 February 2008. This visited the main points of architectural interest. Many of the sites were reduced to overgrown rubble, and these were photographed. The sites were geographically located, forming part of the main document compiled by Umlando: Archaeological Tourism and Resource Management. Archaic Consulting has investigated the library at Cedara, various published documents and the Provincial Archives Repository in Pietermaritzburg.

3. Executive Summary:

Not much structure exists on the site in question, except for the clusters of occupied, functional buildings that form reception, accommodation and technical support on the south westerly portion of the Port Durnford Forest Reserve. This is because many of the structures that were on the site, viz the old Sawmill, and foresters houses, have been demolished, ostensibly to prevent squatters moving in to the buildings, or removing the materials incrementally.

The author is aware of the practicalities of maintaining buildings that are not in use, as well as the security issue that is often posed when remote structures on large pieces of land are left vacant. However, this is also a management issue, and the corporate organizations that have the privilege to own or manage these large tracts of land should also be responsible for the retention, documentation and habitation/maintenance of these structures.

The **general recommendation** emanating from this report is that:

Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali should actively approach corporate bodies involved in large, monoculture farming in the rural areas, with the view towards developing a memorandum of understanding with regards to documentation of the sites, and developing management plans which provide for the continued, practical retention of these structures, or, alternatively, official sanction for their demolition once and environmental impact assessment and other documentation has been forthcoming.

The specific recommendations for this site are:- given that this report is compiled with a view towards total demolition in a future mining venture.

The **structures that do exist** have been assessed and do not contribute in a large manner to the heritage of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. They are largely solitary, of modest form and construction, and whilst they contribute in part to the history of experimental tree planting in the province, the extant stands of Kauri Pines and Euclaypts give a louder testimony. Their value from a local, regional, national and international level is low on every account.

The **structures that don't exist** (ie demolished structures) have little record, and it is unlikely that excavation of the foundations will be telling of anything other than the plan form. As Marwick noted, many of the early buildings were wattle and daub, and the possibility of much artifact from this construction is limited. However, with regards to the first house, site PD 39, the presence of a suitably qualified archaeologist during initial site clearing is suggested, with the view towards identifying any midden sites which can add material artifact to the historical period.

The author wishes to **elicit the support** of *Amafa aKwaZulu Natali* for the **provisional protection of the large stand of Queensland Kauri Pine** (*Agathis Robusta*) which were among the first trees planted at this plantation, before 1920 and which form a unique feature in the history of forestry.

4. History of the site:

Information on Port Durnford Reserve is sketchy, relying heavily on some archival sources and the booklet, '*KwaMahlathi- the story of forestry in Zululand.*' Its demarcation as a Forest Reserve falls in with the Delimitation of Zululand, and the freeing up of land for European Settlement.

With reference to the general area, Lugg mentions that Port Durnford is 'Ten miles south of Point Durnford, and about six miles north of the Umlalazi mouth, (and) was used during the Zulu War as a base for disembarking troops and supplies, and was established by the gunboat HMS *Forester*. The fort by this name is situated a few miles inland from this point. Port Durnford was named after an officer engaged on a marine survey of the Zululand coast in 1822. It was also at Port Durnford that Cetshwayo was taken on board the transport *Natal* and conveyed to Capetown after his capture in 1879. (Lugg:1948:136-7)

Certainly, the forests around that which forms Port Durnford, Ungoye and Mzingwenya form part of a combined history. From the extract from the 1930 map below, the Ungoye Norwegian Mission (1882) is evident. This is corroborated in the later document discussing this. (CNC /1731914/898 Norwegian mission station on Port Durnford forest reserve.) Archival evidence also points to the lengthy process that established it as a railway sleeper reserve in 1911. (SGO/III/1/304/SG2311/1911)

Marwick notes that the first permanent forester only moved onto the site in 1915- prior to this it was run out of Ngoye Forest, which is close by. Extensive clearing of Lala palm forest had to be done before planting. Indeed, the Mzingwenya forest adjacent to Port Durnford was used for a while felling the Umdoni trees.

Much experimentation took place at Port Durnford, and the maps on Fig 2 and 3 bear testament to the manner in which this was handled.



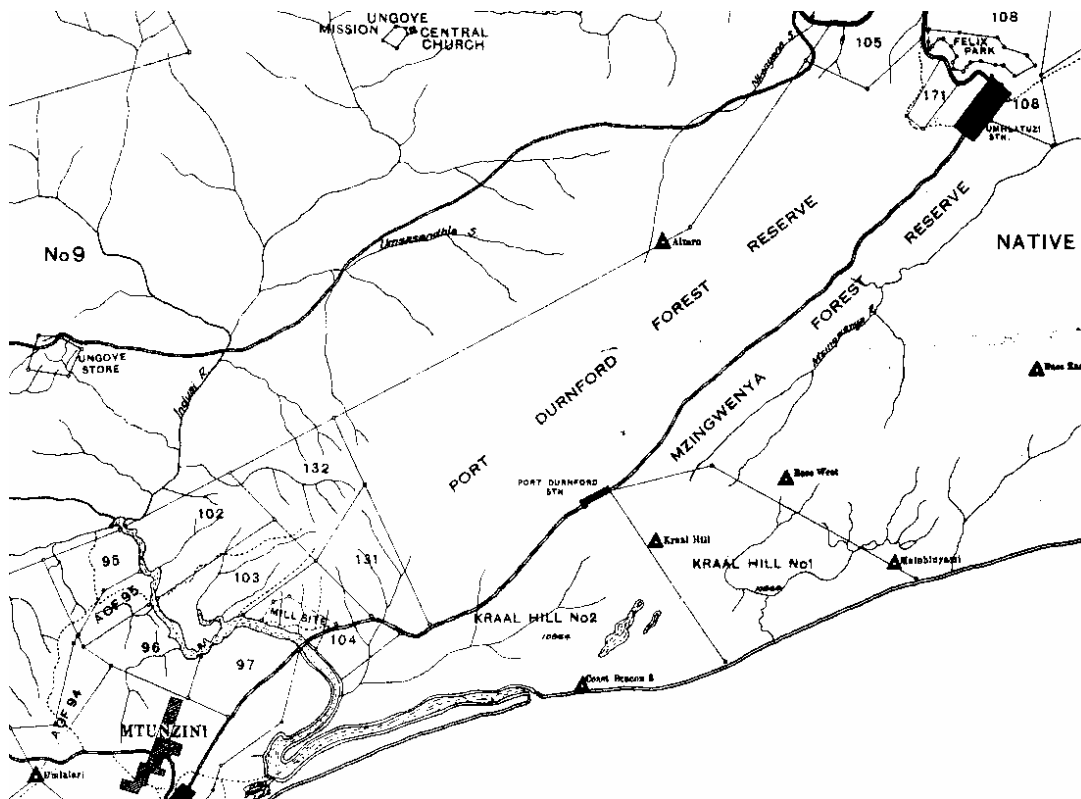


Fig 1: Map from 1930 showing site



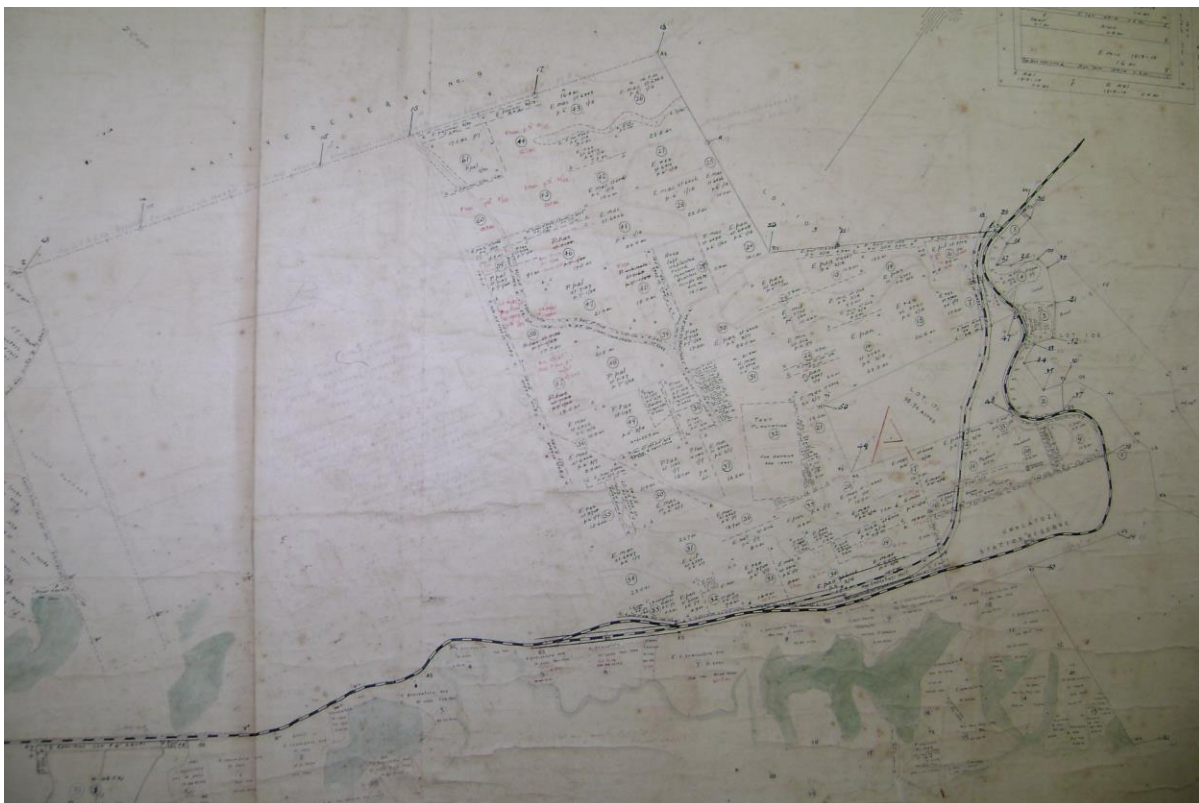


Fig 2: Northern end of Port Durnford Forest Reserve, showing planting beds and railway line

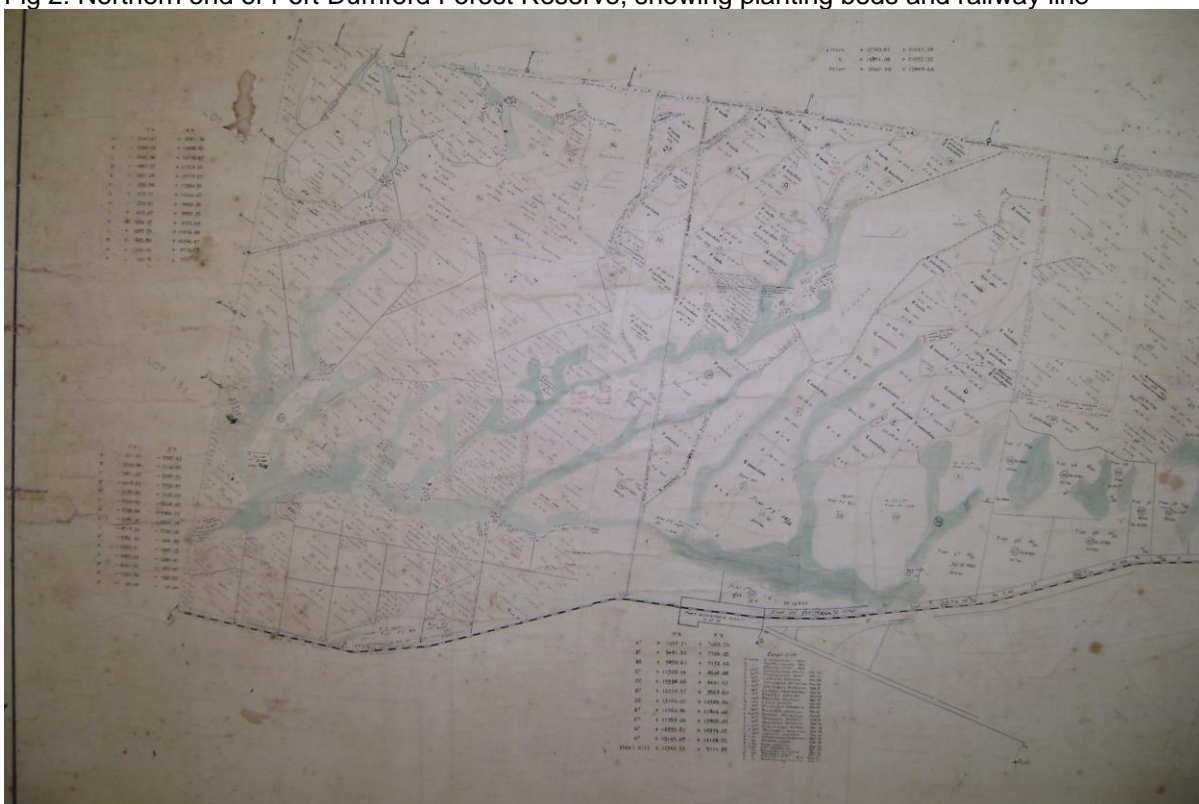


Fig 3: Southerly end of the Port Durnford Forest Reserve compiled in 1934.

5. Individual Sites

5.1 site 1 (Umlando reference PD 39)

This is the first of the sites which has been demolished and bulldozed, and is really only evident from the uneven ground covering foundations, and the established trees. It appears as an early site from two pieces of evidence: the map above compiled in 1934, shows the forester's house in between the rail reserve and the adjoining Lot 171. In addition, Marwick notes in his volume, *KwaMahlathi*, that Forester F Noffke took up residence in Block A (this site) in 1915. However, what the material condition of this building was is uncertain, particularly as Marwick talks of the early foresters living in wattle and daub huts. "This officer eventually took up residence at Block A on 1 September 1915." (Marwick:1984:42) The 1937 Aerial photographs shows an indistinct but substantial building at this spot, and also a collection of buildings at the position on Fig A which shows the Umhlatuze Station. In addition, there exists a potential site which would also have been demolished, as seen on Fig 7.



Fig 4: Showing site



Fig 5: Showing site and vegetation



Fig 6: Showing site overgrown with grass

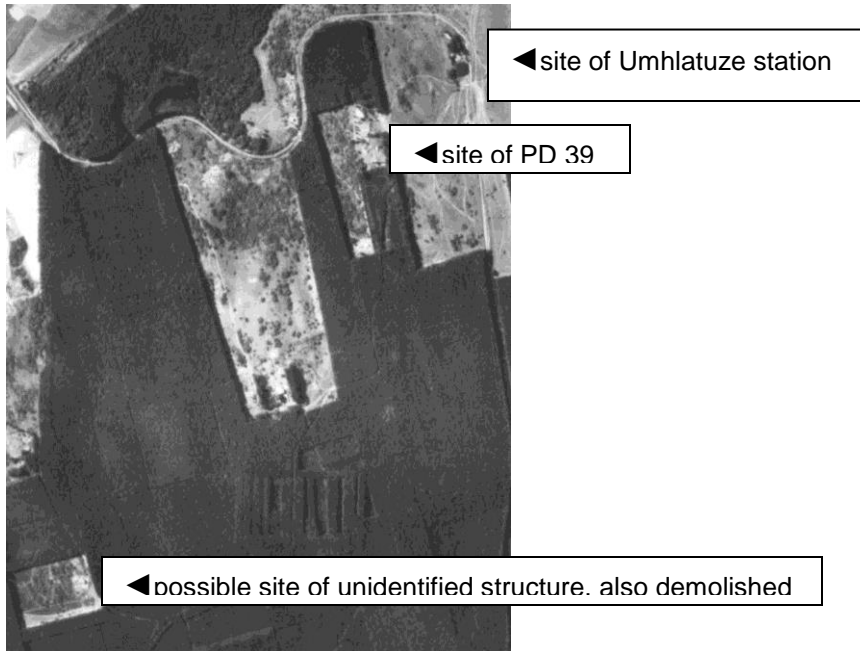


Fig 7: 1937 Aerial photo showing sites correlating to 1930 map in fig 1.

In any event, structures that were demolished and bulldozed on the site date back to pre-1937 (being evident on the photo's) and should not have been demolished without a permit from either *Amafa*, or its progenitor, the National monuments Council.

Condition of site: ruin

Recommendations: since this seems to be the oldest habitation site, the presence of an archaeologist during site clearing is recommended.

| Site 1 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | Not known | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

5.2 site 2 (Umlando reference PD 27)

The remains of a dwelling, and concealed rainwater tanks are what is left of this site. The building has been largely destroyed, but some walls still remain to eaves level. The building is of conventional brick and mortar construction, and gauged from the occasional coursing built pre-World War II. No evidence has been found as to what this structure looked like, although its position may be seen on the 1937 aerial photo. (Fig 8)

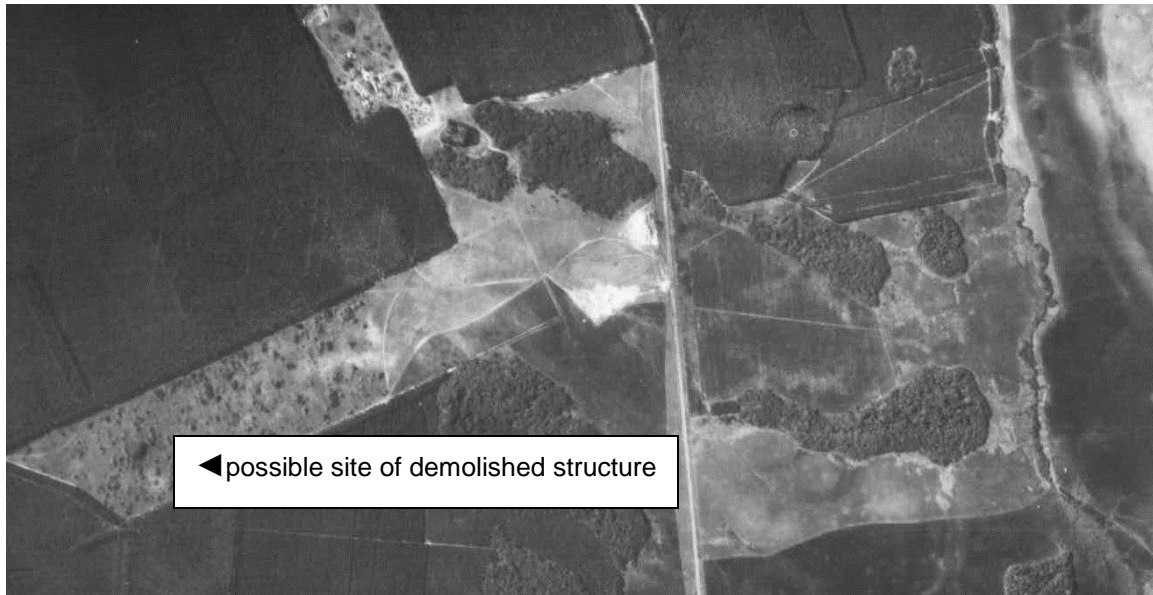


Fig 8: 1937 Aerial photograph showing possible site of PD27



Fig 9: ruined walls as remains of domestic structure



Fig 10: showing walls



Fig 11: rainwater tanks

In any event, structures that were demolished and bulldozed on the site date back to pre-1937 (being evident on the photo's) and should not have been demolished without a permit from either *Amafa*, or its progenitor, the National Monuments Council.

Condition of site: ruin except for water tanks

Recommendation: none and demolition of the rainwater tanks is recommended

| site 2 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | Not known | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

5.3 old sawmill site (Umlando reference PD 22a and 22b)

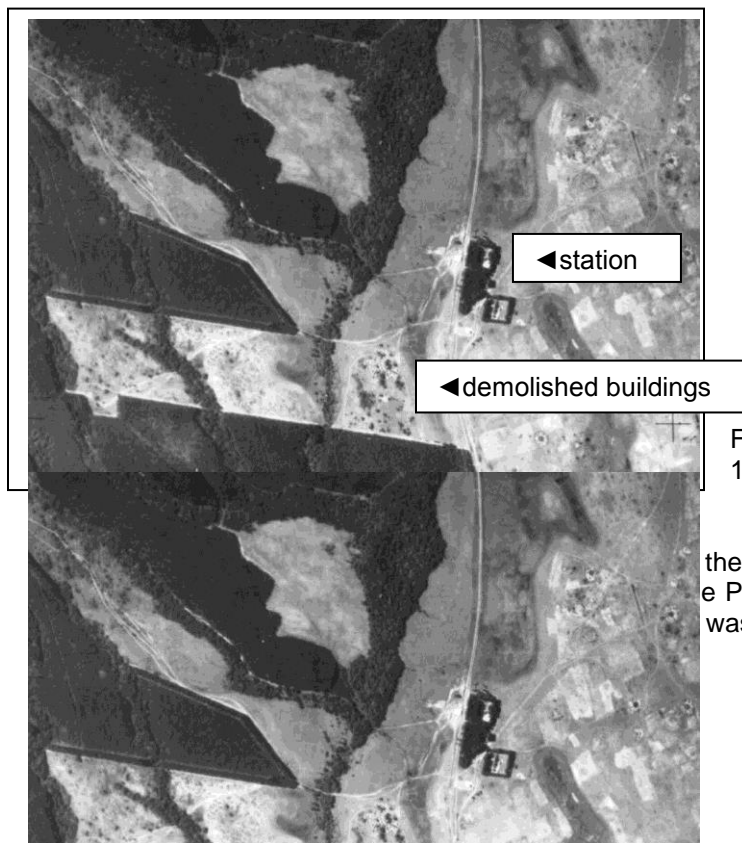


Fig 12: Showing an excerpt from the 1937 aerial photo of the site

the railway line from time to time. In the e Port Durnford side (as opposed to the was on this portion, yet across what was

the railway line at that time, in the 1937 photos, a distinct development is seen. Marwick notes that the first sawmill was set up at Port Durnford as early as 1915, and this was carried out by Gray Bros, the people who ran Eshowe sawmills. As the majority of these logs were 'Mdoni logs from the Umsingwenya swamp forests which were converted into light sleepers sold mostly to the sugar mills' the position of the development on the Umsingwenya side is plausible. (Marwick;1984:48) The lack of development on the Port Durnford side is also explained by the phrase; 'the firm decided to build a mill at Port Durnford and this was completed towards the end of 1938 and continued in operation until the end of 1952 when it was replaced' (ibid:50)

Evidence of the scattered buildings to the south of the old sawmill site is seen on the 1937 photo as 'demolished buildings' and this is possibly the remains of the following; 'In 1925 a contract was entered into with the Rand Mining Timber Co. for the purchase of 7000 tons of mining timber and 12 000 tons of firewood. The company laid down tracks and erected a sawbench. These were, however, badly located and were never used to full capacity.'(Ibid:48)



Fig 13: remnant of sawmill- loading ramps



Fig 14: concrete platform and ramp (right)



Fig 15: looking towards elevated road level



Fig 16: new trees over rubble



Fig 17: concrete block



Fig 18: debris on site



Fig 19: view back towards site of sawmill

The structures that were demolished and bulldozed on the site date back to pre-1937 (being evident on the photo's) and should not have been demolished without a permit from either *Amafa*, or its progenitor, the National Monuments Council.

Condition of site: ruin except for loading ramps

Recommendation: none and demolition of the loading ramps is recommended

| Site 3 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | low | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

5.4 site of possible house (Umlando reference PD 23)

This site was identified by Umlando on the prevalence of established garden trees as well as a midden that was partially excavated during the investigation.

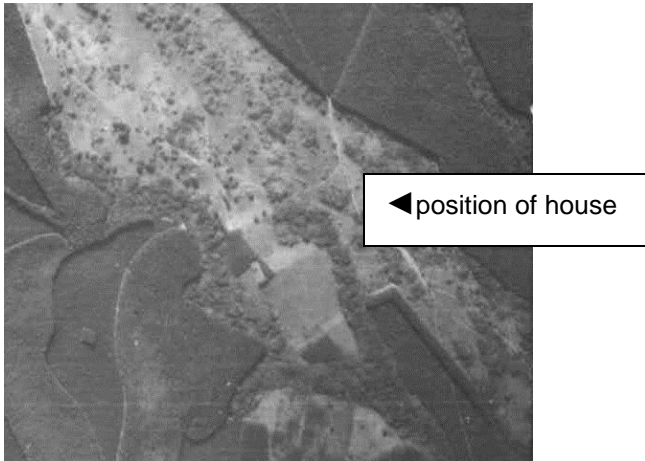


Fig 20: possible position of house

Condition of site: overgrown ruin

Recommendation: none

| Site 4 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | Not known | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

5.5 site 5 (Umlando reference PD 19)



Fig 21: site of demolished house



Fig 22: view from road



Fig 23: remnant of pillar in undergrowth



Fig 24: edge of foundation below soil

The structures that were demolished and then bulldozed on the site date back to pre-1937 (being evident on the photo's) and should not have been demolished without a permit from either *Amafa*, or its progenitor, the National Monuments Council.

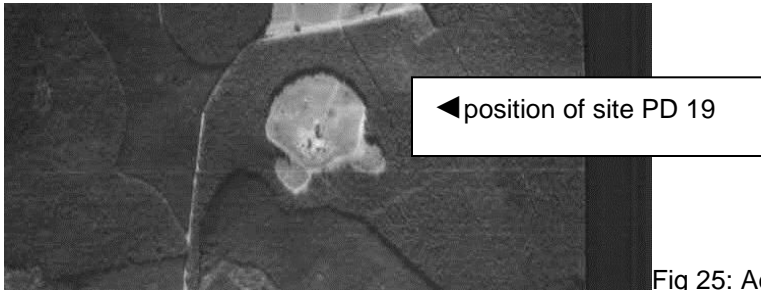


Fig 25: Aerial photo (1937) showing site

Condition of site: overgrown ruin

Recommendation: none

| Site 5 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | Not known | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

5.6 site 6 (encampment) (Umlando reference PD 20)

This site is identified as a Forester's encampment on the maps in Fig 2 and 3. Extensive bits of brick walling exist on the surface which has been extensively bulldozed. A water tower still stands.



Fig 26: bulldozed foundations with rubble on top



Fig 27: remaining water tower



Fig 28: view of site from road



Fig 29: close up of foundation rubble



The aerial photo to the left (fig 30) shows site PD 19 below and the structure on PD 20 above.

The structures that were demolished and bulldozed on the site date back to pre-1937 (being evident on the photo's) and should not have been demolished without a permit from either *Amafa*, or its progenitor, the National Monuments Council.

Fig 30: showing site PD 20

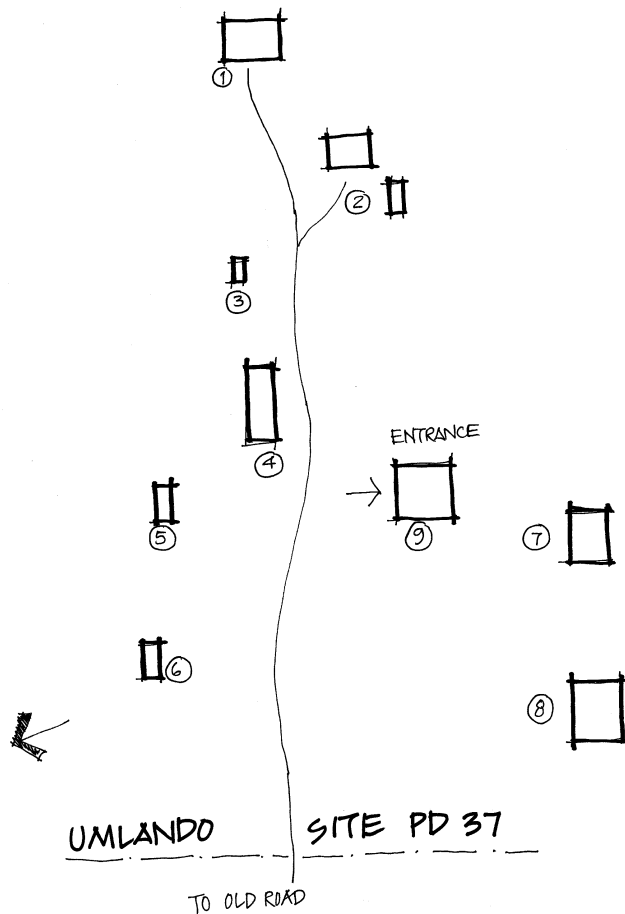
Condition of site: overgrown ruin

Recommendation: none

| Site 6 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | Not known | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

5.7 entrance site (Umlando reference PD 37)

This consists of a collection of functional buildings, largely well maintained, which form the entrance complex comprising forester's houses, manager's houses, technical workshops and reception/company spaces. The buildings are of conventional construction, well built, and modest. None of the buildings are particularly meritorious, and are largely dissociated as a group. Should demolition be required, there is little from an architectural, historical, technical or social perspective that should affect the application.



Buildings no 1, 2, 7 and 8 are enclosed housing complexes, largely of latter construction but no 7 likely to fall in within Amafa protection. Building no 3 is a small cottage, possibly built in the 1950's. Building no 4 is a garage complex and has little to merit if except for a large shed. Buildings no 5 and 6 are ill-maintained, ill-inhabited and have little merit, although they are likely to be older than 60 years.

Building no 9 is the entrance building, and is a solid brick structure under Marseille tile. It is also likely to fall within the protection of the Heritage Act no 10 of 1997.

There is no evidence of any of these structures on the 1937 aerial photos.

Fig 31: rough sketch showing the layout of the entrance complex



Fig 32: showing part complex 1



Fig 33: showing part of complex 2



Fig 34: showing part of complex 2



Fig 35: showing part of complex 2



Fig 36: part of complex no 2



Fig 37: Showing building 3



Fig 38: showing complex 4



Fig 39: complex no 4 from the south



Fig 40: showing the north western elevation of the shed in complex 4



Fig 41: complex no 7



Fig 42: complex no 8



Fig 43: complex number 7



Fig 44: main entrance from the east



Fig 45: Main entrance building from North



Fig 46: derelict building no 5



Fig 47: derelict building no 6

Condition of site: the buildings are generally in good order. They are architecturally not significant, although they are good examples of functional buildings. They do not operate as a group, do not form streetscape, and are not associated with any major event nor person. They are remote from Empangeni and Mtunzini and their situation limits alternative uses.

Recommendation: should demolition be requested, this group of buildings is not significant with regards to the heritage of the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

| Site 7 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | low | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

6. Other buildings

6.1 house outside entrance complex



Fig 48: view from south west



Fig 49: view from dirt road



Fig 50: view from driveway

This structure was not identified in the Umlando report but does form part of the architectural impact assessment. It is of the same period as complex no 7 in the previous section, a simple tiled, saddled roof over a masonry structure. It is suspected that the building is either older than 60 years, or constructed soon after World War II.

Condition of site: the building is generally in good order. It is architecturally not significant. It does not operate as part of a group, nor does it form streetscape. It is not associated with any major event nor person.

Recommendation: should demolition be requested, this building is not deemed significant with regards to the heritage of the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

| Site 8 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | low | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

6.2 ruin on road to labour camp



Fig 51: ruined structure

This is a partly demolished structure south of the main entrance. It was not identified as part of the archaeological impact assessment. It was built in around 1940.

Condition of site: ruin

Recommendation: should demolition be requested, this ruin is not significant with regards to the heritage of the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

| Site 9 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | low | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

6.3 labour camp

As with the previous structure, this was not identified under the archaeological impact assessment. It is a workers camp, of itinerant construction, with some of the older buildings being constructed out of asbestos sheeting. They are constructed of concrete block with steel windows.



Fig 52: view of group from road



Fig 53: view of unit



Fig 54: view of ablution block

Condition of site: the buildings are generally in good order. They are architecturally not significant, although they are good examples of functional buildings. They do operate as a group, but not as a streetscape, and are not associated with any major event nor person. They are remote from Empangeni and Mtunzini and their situation limits alternative uses. They are constructed of mixed materials, but largely concrete block and asbestos. It is suggested that they were constructed post-war.

Recommendation: should demolition be requested, this group of buildings is not significant with regards to the heritage of the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

| Site 10 | Local value | Regional value | National value | International value |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Architectural | low | low | low | low |
| Historical | low | low | low | low |
| Technical | low | low | low | low |
| scientific | low | low | low | low |
| Social | low | low | low | low |

6. Commentary on trees

The author wishes to elicit the support of *Amafa aKwaZulu Natali* for the provisional protection of the large stand of Queensland Kauri Pine (*Agathis Robusta*) which were among the first trees planted at this plantation, before 1920 and which form a unique feature in the history of forestry.



Fig 55: Kauri pines

7. References

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- Marwick, C (1973) *KwaMahlathi- the Story of Forestry in Zululand*
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Provincial Archives Repository:

CNC /1731914/898 Norwegian mission station on **Port Durnford** forest reserve.
CNC/186/1914/1614 Application Of The Ngoye Forest Co For Permission To Erect An Aerial tramway From Ngoye To **Port Durnford**
SGO/III/1/304/SG2311/1911 **Port Durnford** And Umhlatuzi Railway Sleeper Plantation.

9. Appendix: sketch map of sites discussed

